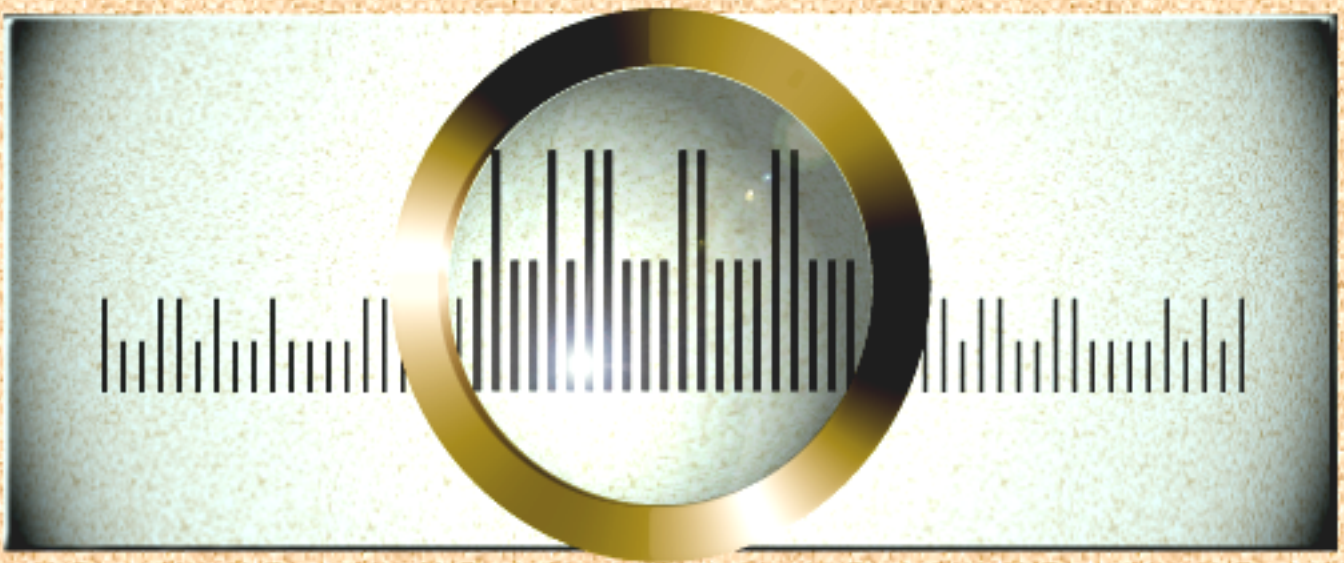




# POSTNET Barcode Certification Technical Guide



ADDRESS MANAGEMENT  
NATIONAL CUSTOMER SUPPORT CENTER  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
6060 PRIMACY PKWY STE 201  
MEMPHIS TN 38188-0001

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## PURPOSE

POSTNET Barcode Certification is a process that evaluates the ability of printers and software to produce quality barcodes capable of being scanned by the United States Postal Service's barcode scanning equipment. POSTNET Barcode Certification also allows for compatibility testing of software and printers and listing of certified products by vendor name, product name, model, version number, etc. This certification program is available to manufacturers of printers, software, and systems (micro, mini, or mainframe). Manufacturer participation is strictly voluntary. POSTNET Barcode Certification by the USPS does not warrant components for any purpose, nor does it ensure or guarantee mail acceptance.

## OVERVIEW

Manufacturers of printer and software products capable of producing POSTNET barcodes are encouraged to participate in the barcode certification program because it serves as a quality control check for manufacturers to use in verifying barcode quality prior to product release. Barcode specifications are listed in the *Domestic Mail Manual* (DMM) and Publication 25, *Designing Letter Mail* (Sections 5.3—5.6). In addition, the POSTNET Barcode Certification Vendor's List is published quarterly to assist USPS customers in purchasing POSTNET barcode equipment.

Certification can be conducted at a vendor's manufacturing site, customer site, or in some cases, at the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) in Memphis, Tennessee. An address file containing 308 addresses is used for testing, and this test file, which is provided to vendors upon application, consists of addresses that produce all variations of check digits. The test file is available in ASCII fixed length, comma delimited, dBase, and block formats. Available media include 3.5" or 5.25" diskettes.

A representative from the NCSC will verify production of test samples and answer any technical questions that arise during testing. Testing is intended to evaluate dimensional and mathematical qualities of the POSTNET barcode. Height, width, pitch, tilt, and offset are measured for dimensional quality, and the barcode (containing ZIP+4, delivery point, and check digit codes) is checked for mathematical quality.

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## POSTNET BARCODE CERTIFICATION

In April 1988, the USPS implemented the Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS), which was designed to improve the accuracy of ZIP+4, 5-Digit ZIP, and carrier route codes appearing on mailpieces. This was accomplished by providing service bureaus, commercial mailers, and software vendors a common platform by which to measure and quantify address matching software accuracy.

The USPS has expanded upon the success of CASS and responded to requests from the mailing industry by providing the POSTNET Barcode Certification program. During the certification process, the USPS will evaluate and certify printers, computer software, or systems (micro, mini, and mainframe) that produce POSTNET barcodes to verify that the barcodes meet all dimensional and mathematical specifications required by USPS barcode-reader equipment. However, this process only validates the ability of the equipment or software to correctly produce the POSTNET barcode. The readability of the barcode is a separate issue influenced by factors such as paper, ink, reflectance, and the “background noise” of an individual mailpiece. Therefore, readability is not included in the certification criteria; however, readability requirements are outlined in Publication 25, *Designing Letter Mail* (Section 5.7).

Recognizing the need for flexibility in the certification process, the USPS offers three certification options. POSTNET Barcode Certification can be performed at the vendor’s facility, at the NCSC in Memphis, Tennessee, or at the NCSC with the assistance of vendor technicians. Manufacturers who successfully complete the certification process will be issued a USPS POSTNET Barcode Certificate of Quality and listed, along with their products, in the quarterly POSTNET Barcode Certification Vendors List. The list is available upon request from the NCSC by calling (800) 238-3150.

We encourage printer and software vendors to allow the USPS to retain certain pieces of equipment and software for a period of time at the NCSC certification site for use as a test bed for ongoing validation of newly developed barcode software and printers. A cross-reference matrix of all software and the printers on which the software has been certified will be maintained and published.

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## TEST PROCEDURES FOR POSTNET BARCODE CERTIFICATION

1. Upon receiving your test files on diskette, you will have four different formats from which to choose: ASCII fixed length, ASCII delimited, ASCII block, and dBase.
2. Prior to certification, you will need to run some samples on the chosen media. Only the 9-digit ZIP+4 Code and the 11-digit delivery point barcode code will be tested. If your component is capable of producing the barcode in the lower right corner and the address block, we would like to see both.
3. For testing purposes, we will be accepting the following samples:
  - A. Lower right corner ..... (9-digit or DPBC) ..... 200 each
  - B. Address block ..... (9-digit or DPBC) ..... 100 each
4. Samples in NLQ and draft modes (where applicable) will be taken by dividing the quantities in half.
5. An evaluation of the samples will be performed at the NCSC. You will be notified verbally of the results. If your samples meet all specifications, a date will be chosen for the actual certification.

## BARCODE CERTIFICATION TEST RECORD LAYOUT

Field Sequence Number	Field Description	Logical Length	Relative Position From Thru	
1	Name	30	01	30
2	Title	30	31	60
3	Delivery Address	40	61	100
* 4	Last Line	40	101	140
5	City Name	28	141	168
6	State Abbreviation	02	169	170
7	5-Digit ZIP Code	05	171	175
8	Add-On Code	04	176	179
9	ZIP+4 (no hyphen)	09	180	188
*10	ZIP+4 (with hyphen)	10	189	198
*11	ZIP+4 + Delivery Point Code	11	199	209
*12	DPBC Add-On Code	02	210	211
*13	Record Type Code	02	212	213

\* Optional fields

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## EXAMPLES

Field Sequence Number	Field Description	Record #1
1	Name	24 6 31 9 1
2	Title	BARCODE CERTIFICATION TEST
3	Delivery Address	PO BOX 25
* 4	Last Line	LOOP STATION IL 60603-9000
5	City Name	LOOP STATION IL
6	States Abbreviation	IL
7	5-Digit ZIP Code	60603
8	Add-On Code	9000
* 9	ZIP+4 (no hyphen)	606039000
*10	ZIP+4 (with hyphen)	60603-9000
*11	ZIP+4 + Delivery Point Code	60603900025
*12	DPBC Add-On Code	25
*13	Record Type Code	01

\* Optional Fields



## Application for POSTNET Barcode Certification

Please complete the following questions and return this form to the National Customer Support Center (NCSC) at the address below. **Do not send any hardware or software until notified to do so.** Each vendor is permitted two attempts for certification. If the first attempt is unsuccessful, the vendor will have thirty days to resubmit for a second attempt. If the second attempt is unsuccessful, the component will be suspended for six months.

All shipping and handling charges to the test site are the responsibility of the vendor. The United States Postal Service assumes no liability for any damage or loss that may occur as a result of the certification process.

**Samples of the POSTNET barcode that are currently produced by the component to be certified must be furnished with each request.**

Any required special drivers, cables, or software must be furnished when the component is submitted for certification. **It is the vendor's responsibility to furnish user-friendly, step-by-step instructions and user manuals as well as cables and connection devices.** You also have the option to deliver and perform your own setup. Vendors requesting certification of their component on specific equipment or systems must furnish that equipment if it is not available at the NCSC.

### Customer Information

<input type="text"/>																				<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>		
Attention Name																				Area Code			Phone Number								
<input type="text"/>																															
Firm/Customer Name																															
<input type="text"/>																				<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>					
Complete Street Address, PO Box or Rural/Hwy Contract Route and Box #																				Apt/Suite #											
<input type="text"/>															<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>									
City or Post Office															State		ZIP+4 Code			+		<input type="text"/>									

### Certification Options

Which of the following certification options are you requesting?

- |                          |          |  |        |
|--------------------------|----------|--|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | OPTION 1 | USPS at your facility                      | \$1250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | OPTION 2 | NCSC/Memphis site (with vendor support)    | \$375  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | OPTION 3 | NCSC/Memphis site (with no vendor support) | \$750  |

**Note:** An additional \$100.00 fee is required for each subsequent component submitted for certification. All fees must be received before the certification process begins.

### Payment Method

Make check or money order payable to "United States Postal Service"

Purchase order #:

- |                                   |   |                               |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check    | <input type="checkbox"/> Money Order      | <input type="checkbox"/> Visa | <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discover | <input type="checkbox"/> American Express |                               |                                     |

Card #:

Card expiration date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Authorized Personnel (please print)

Signature

The person signing above accepts total responsibility governing the use of this card and agrees to comply with the terms of the issuer.

### For further information, call

NATIONAL CUSTOMER SUPPORT CENTER  
POSTNET BARCODE CERTIFICATION  
DEPARTMENT  
1-800-233-5866

### Mail order form to

POSTNET BARCODE CERTIFICATION  
DEPARTMENT  
NATIONAL CUSTOMER SUPPORT CENTER  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
6060 PRIMACY PKWY STE 201  
MEMPHIS TN 38188-0001



## General Information

Please identify the component submitted for certification by answering the following questions.

**Note:** Each piece of equipment being certified must be submitted on a separate certification request form. Copies are acceptable.

Software Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Version # \_\_\_\_\_

Printer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Model # \_\_\_\_\_

System: Software \_\_\_\_\_ Version # \_\_\_\_\_

Printer: \_\_\_\_\_ Model # \_\_\_\_\_

(INCLUDES ONE SOFTWARE PACKAGE AND ONE PRINTER.)

How is your barcode produced? ☐ Software ☐ Firmware

With which of the following computers is the component compatible?

☐ Micro ☐ Mini ☐ Mainframe ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

This component is compatible with which of the following media? ☐ Letters ☐ Flats ☐ Form Feed

Do you request that this component be retained by the NCSC for ongoing validation? (Terms and conditions for retention are negotiable.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

This component can print the POSTNET barcode in which of the following configurations?

ABOVE ADDRESS BLOCK	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-digit	<input type="checkbox"/> DPBC
BELOW ADDRESS BLOCK	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-digit	<input type="checkbox"/> DPBC
LOWER RIGHT CORNER	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-digit	<input type="checkbox"/> DPBC

If certifying software, with which operating system(s) is the program compatible? \_\_\_\_\_

If certifying a printer, what is the printer type?

☐ Dot Matrix ☐ Daisy Wheel ☐ Thermal ☐ Ink Jet  
☐ Band ☐ Laser ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

If certifying a system, would you like to be listed in the POSTNET Vendor List under the system listing only or under the software and printer listing as well?

☐ System Listing Only ☐ Software & Printer Listing ☐ Both

## Terms and Conditions

The vendor retains responsibility for immediately notifying the US Postal Service in the event that the certified component is altered or modified in any manner that affects the component's ability to manufacture POSTNET barcodes. The process of POSTNET Barcode Certification by the US Postal Service does not warrant the component for any purpose, nor does it ensure or guarantee acceptance of the mail. The word "POSTNET" was developed by the US Postal Service to describe the barcodes used to encode ZIP Code information on mailpieces. It may also be used to describe a product that produces the POSTNET barcode.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE